

REMARKS

Claims 1-37 were originally filed in the present application. Claims 1-22 were subsequently cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 38-59 were added. Claims 25, 26, and 38 are currently cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and new claims 60-62 are added. Thus, claims 23, 24, 27-37, and 39-62 are pending in the present application.

Reconsideration of this application in light of the above amendments and the following remarks is requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 43 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. However, it is believed that the present amendments overcome this rejection. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102: Saitou

Claim 23

Claim 23 recites:

23. An assembly of microcomponents comprising:
a first microcomponent fabricated over a substrate;
a second microcomponent fabricated over the substrate; and
a separate extension member not anchored directly to the
substrate, the extension member being movable relative to the substrate
for reconfiguring between a first position and a second position, wherein:
when in the first position, the extension member is
laterally positioned internal to the second microcomponent and is
laterally movable relative to the second microcomponent; and
when in the second position, the extension member is
engaged with the second microcomponent and extends beyond a
perimeter of the second microcomponent to contact the first
microcomponent.

Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,806,152 to Saitou, et al. ("Saitou").

The PTO provides in MPEP §2131 that:

"[t]o anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim...."

Therefore, to sustain this rejection with respect to claim 23, Saitou must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim. However, Saitou does not disclose a separate extension member not anchored directly to a substrate, the extension member being movable relative to the substrate for reconfiguring between a first position and a second position such that, when in the first position, the extension member is laterally positioned internal to a second microcomponent fabricated over the substrate and is laterally movable relative to the second microcomponent and, when in the second position, the extension member is engaged with the second microcomponent and extends beyond a perimeter of the second microcomponent to contact a first microcomponent also fabricated over the substrate, at least in the context of claim 23.

Therefore, the §102 rejection of claim 23 is not supported by Saitou. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

Claim 43

Claim 43 recites:

43. An apparatus, comprising:
a first microcomponent; and
a second microcomponent separated from the first microcomponent by a separation distance, wherein the separation distance is adjustable in response to a relative position of a first portion of the second microcomponent relative to a second portion of the second microcomponent, and wherein the first portion is completely released from a substrate on which the first and second microcomponents are fabricated.

Claim 43 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Saitou. To sustain this rejection, Saitou must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim. However, in the context of claim 43, Saitou does not disclose a first portion of the second microcomponent that is completely released from the substrate on which the first and second microcomponents are fabricated.

Therefore, the §102 rejection of claim 43 is not supported by Saitou. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

Claim 60

New claim 60 recites:

60. A micro-scale apparatus, comprising:
a first microcomponent fabricated over a substrate;
a second microcomponent fabricated over the substrate; and
a separate extension member not anchored directly to the substrate, the extension member being movable relative to the substrate for reconfiguring between a first position and a second position, wherein:
when in the first position, the extension member is laterally positioned internal to the second microcomponent and is laterally movable relative to the second microcomponent;
when in the second position, the extension member is engaged with the second microcomponent and extends beyond a perimeter of the second microcomponent to contact the first microcomponent;
a minimum separation distance exists between proximate edges of the first microcomponent and the extension member, wherein at least a portion of a first profile of the first microcomponent edge substantially conforms to at least a portion of a second profile of the extension member edge; and
at least a portion of the first profile has a first tooth-edged configuration and at least a portion of the second profile has a second tooth-edged configuration configured for engagement with the first tooth-edged configuration.

Claim 60 also cannot be rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Saitou. To sustain such hypothetical rejection, Saitou must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim.

However, in the context of claim 60, Saitou does not disclose a separate extension member not anchored directly to a substrate, the extension member being movable relative to the substrate for reconfiguring between a first position and a second position such that, when in the first position, the extension member is laterally positioned internal to a second microcomponent fabricated over the substrate and is laterally movable relative to the second microcomponent and, when in the second position, the extension member is engaged with the second microcomponent and extends beyond a perimeter of the second microcomponent to contact a first microcomponent also fabricated over the substrate. Saitou also

fails to disclose that a minimum separation distance exists between proximate edges of the first microcomponent and the extension member, wherein at least a portion of a first profile of the first microcomponent edge substantially conforms to at least a portion of a second profile of the extension member edge, and wherein at least a portion of the first profile has a first tooth-edged configuration and at least a portion of the second profile has a second tooth-edged configuration configured for engagement with the first tooth-edged configuration, in the context of claim 60.

Therefore, a §102 rejection of claim 60 cannot be supported by Saitou.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102: Ellis

Claim 23

Claim 23 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,561,725 to Ellis, et al. ("Ellis"). To sustain this rejection with respect to claim 23, Ellis must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim.

However, Ellis does not disclose a separate extension member not anchored directly to a substrate, the extension member being movable relative to the substrate for reconfiguring between a first position and a second position such that, when in the first position, the extension member is laterally positioned internal to a second microcomponent fabricated over the substrate and is laterally movable relative to the second microcomponent and, when in the second position, the extension member is engaged with the second microcomponent and extends beyond a perimeter of the second microcomponent to contact a first microcomponent also fabricated over the substrate, at least in the context of claim 23.

Therefore, the §102 rejection of claim 23 is not supported by Ellis. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

Claim 60

New claim 60 also cannot be rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Ellis. To sustain such hypothetical rejection, Ellis must contain all of the above claimed elements of the claim.

However, in the context of claim 60, Ellis does not disclose a separate extension member not anchored directly to a substrate, the extension member being movable relative to the substrate for reconfiguring between a first position and a second position such that, when in the first position, the extension member is laterally positioned internal to a second microcomponent fabricated over the substrate and is laterally movable relative to the second microcomponent and, when in the second position, the extension member is engaged with the second microcomponent and extends beyond a perimeter of the second microcomponent to contact a first microcomponent also fabricated over the substrate. Ellis also fails to disclose that a minimum separation distance exists between proximate edges of the first microcomponent and the extension member, wherein at least a portion of a first profile of the first microcomponent edge substantially conforms to at least a portion of a second profile of the extension member edge, and wherein at least a portion of the first profile has a first tooth-edged configuration and at least a portion of the second profile has a second tooth-edged configuration configured for engagement with the first tooth-edged configuration, in the context of claim 60.

Therefore, a §102 rejection of claim 60 cannot be supported by Ellis.

Conclusion

It is clear from all of the foregoing that independent claims 23, 43, and 60 are in condition for allowance. Dependent claims 24, 27-37, 39-42, 44-59, 61, and 62 depend from and further limit independent claims 23, 43, and 60 and, therefore, are allowable as well.

It is believed that all matters set forth in the Office Action have been addressed, and that claims 23, 24, 27-37, and 39-62 are in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and an early indication of the allowability of the claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner deem that an interview with Applicants' undersigned attorney would expedite consideration, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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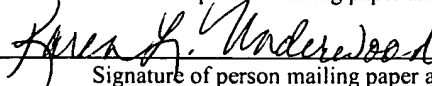
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